

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

August 6, 1976

No. 366

EXCHANGE OF TOASTS
BETWEEN
HIS EXCELLENCY HUSHANG ANSARY
MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND FINANCE OF IRAN
AND THE HONORABLE HENRY A. KISSINGER
SECRETARY OF STATE
AT A DINNER IN HONOR OF THE SECRETARY
TEHRAN, IRAN
AUGUST 6, 1976

MINISTER ANSARY: Mr. Secretary, Mrs. Kissinger, Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen:

May I first of all, on behalf of Mrs. Ansary and myself, and all of our Iranian friends present here, extend a very warm welcome to you and your distinguished wife, Mr. Secretary, and to the distinguished members of your party. We are very pleased, privileged and honored that you could accept a very cordial invitation to be a very important guest at this time, to take time off from the important duties of your high office, which we all know is crowded with important issues, critical issues, long hours and critical decisions. That office, Mr. Secretary, has come a long way from the days of your esteemed predecessor, Thomas Jefferson. My old friend Dean Rusk had a favorite story to tell. I recall he used to talk about a letter that Thomas Jefferson — and he insisted in calling him not the third President of the United States but the first Secretary of State — wrote to President George Washington. It went like this: "Dear Mr. President: We are still without any news worth reporting to you. It's been months since any news of any significance came from Europe." And with that he went off on an extended vacation.

I read in the press now, Mr. Secretary, that you have put in something like 547,000 miles in overseas travel alone. Well, having a much less glamorous record of overseas travel myself, something like 150,000 miles on the average every year, I do understand and sympathize with you for the great physical inconveniences that you exercise and experience on your trips abroad. Of course, in your case, Mr. Secretary, that is compensated for by the sweet smell of success, of which I'm glad to say you have plenty. I recall one of your commentators who said that Henry Kissinger must have an awful time every time he looks at himself in the mirror, feeling that he has to out-do himself on that particular day, on every particular day, as compared with his other great accomplishments of the day before. This commentator said that you, Mr. Secretary, are a gross violation of Emerson's law of compensation, where every sweet moment has to be paid for by a missed step.

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You have never missed a step, Mr. Secretary, but I'm glad that on this particular trip you chose to visit Tehran on board Air Force Three. If you had decided to come in on a commercial plane, it would have taken you about a month to get reservations. If you had decided to come in on a ship, you would have been stranded at one of our ports, in one of the 500-odd ships that we now have waiting there to disembark. If you had decided to come in a car, you would now have been sitting in a queue 22 miles inside Turkish territory. That, Mr. Secretary, is the outcome of a rather phenomenal economic development program that has been implemented under the leadership of His Imperial Majesty in this country. But these are the hazards of very rapid economic development, the problems of the management of abundance. And we have plenty of that in this country.

Now, Mr. Secretary, this year we joined you in celebrating the 200th anniversary of the creation of the United States. Having only recently celebrated the 2,500th anniversary of the Persian monarchy, we know well that 200 years is a very short time in the life of a nation. And yet, through sheer effort and dedication and through sacrifices and determination, your great nation has emerged, in that very short period of time, as the world's most powerful, the world's most advanced and the world's most outstanding nation. As for our country, Mr. Secretary, I must say that we are going through the experiences of our own peaceful revolution. That revolution is based on four important principles. The first is to mobilize, properly and through very efficient use, the entire resources of this country for the development of this economy. That we have been doing under the leadership of His Imperial Majesty in a manner that has made it possible for this country to enjoy a very high rate of economic growth in the past decade. We hope and expect that this steady growth will continue in the years to come.

The second is a very extensive social reform program that is designed to ensure that the benefits of economic development are shared by people from all walks of life in this country. Only this morning, Mr. Secretary, you may have heard His Imperial Majesty handed out the certificate of shares of stock to over 12,000 workers and farmers who have joined in the implementation of a rather novel idea that enables the participation of the different groups of people in this country in the benefits of economic development.

The third is the determination on the part of this country to build up its defense needs, its defense strength. I recall that in the early years, although we had very meager resources, that determination just the same was very evident. We feel that we must do this because not only do we have examples of countries not capable of defending themselves, being in serious difficulty, in our immediate neighborhood — we don't have far to go — but His Imperial Majesty felt, even in the early years, that aside from the defenses of this country itself, the responsibility first lay on the shoulders of the Iranians to make sure that the artery in the Persian Gulf, through which moves something on the order of about 60 percent of the free

world's oil requirements, as far as oil exports from this particular region are concerned, and that therefore the strength of this country should serve as a warning signal to the subversive elements that have since emerged rather strongly in the immediate region. Not only that, I must admit to you that as early as ten years ago His Imperial Majesty personally told me that the day will come when the United States, to whom the rest of the free world looks for strength and support, will find that it cannot be involved permanently in the Viet-Nam war; that it cannot afford to be engaged in other conflicts anything like the Viet-Nam war; and when that day came, it would have to look for friends in different parts of the world, in the interest of the free world at large — friends who could stand on their own feet, who could pay their own way, and who had their hearts in the right place as far as the principles of the strength of defense of the free world at large are concerned. And His Imperial Majesty felt that on that day, Iran should serve as an outstanding example. But although, Mr. Secretary, the determination is clearly there, the decision is clearly ours. Forgive me to say that at times, on occasions, we feel rather sad and disappointed that there is not enough appreciation of the contributions that Iran is making, not only towards defending herself in case of emergency, but as a pillar of strength in the region and as a country and nation that could be depended upon if the free world at large faced serious difficulties.

And last, of course, Mr. Secretary, is the development of the political institutions in this country that are now in the making. Having said all that, permit me to take this opportunity to express my personal gratitude for the great contributions that you, as Co-Chairman of the Iran-United States Joint Economic Commission, have made to the development and expansion of trade at a very rapid rate and that of economic cooperation between our two countries. We regard you as a great and good friend to Iran, Mr. Secretary, and your invaluable contributions, every time I've had the pleasure of sitting with you to discuss matters of mutual interest — and I'm glad to say that those occasions have been many — have not only made things easier in our joint efforts to develop our relations satisfactorily to our mutual benefit, but also the way you have gone about expressing yourself in making these contributions, the way you have taken your serious issues and taken important steps in the direction of offering solutions, have been highly gratifying and I thought — I felt duty bound that a special order of thanks and gratitude at this time would be very appropriate.

May I add to that, Mr. Secretary, my grateful thanks also for the wonderful hospitality, for the warmth and the kindness and the friendship that you have always shown every time I've had the pleasure of calling on you in the United States. I certainly hope that before your departure from this country you will see enough signs of this great traditional friendship, this special sentiment that the people of Iran entertain for the great American nation, and you will take back with you a clear feeling of friendship and warmth from the people of Iran.

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As I look forward to the pleasure of sitting with you tomorrow and with your distinguished colleagues at the time of the third meeting of our Joint Commission, I feel very hopeful that as a result of your audience with my august Sovereign, His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah, today, the possibilities will present themselves for a still further expansion and consolidation of not only the friendship between our two peoples, but also of embarking on still greater and more important ventures of benefit to all of us.

And it is in this spirit, your Excellency, ladies and gentlemen, that I would like to ask you all to rise and join me in a toast to the President of the United States. And while you are standing, may I also ask you to join me in a toast to our distinguished guest of honor, the Honorable Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State of the United States, his very charming wife and to his son David, who is here with us tonight.

SECRETARY KISSINGER: Mr. Minister, Mrs. Ansary, Distinguished Guests:

Let me first of all, on behalf of all of my colleagues, express my gratitude for the marvelous reception that we have received here. We realize that the point Hushang made so subtly, about the relative lengths of our histories, reflects itself in our relative hospitalities. And we know that we in the United States are, as far as hospitality is concerned, an under-developed country. So we appreciate it. But first of all we appreciate the kind words, totally undeserved, that you said about us. But we feel as always very happy here. Hushang said to me that he was giving a little dinner party tonight in a place that was not quite as elegant as the State Department, proving that he is a great diplomat or that he is talking about a State Department that I don't know.

We are beginning our Joint Commission meetings tomorrow, which is one reason why I still have my coat and shirt, because usually after a day's negotiations with Ansary I have lost almost everything that I possess and I just want to tell this to our Iranian friends here, that the real negotiation hasn't started yet and so I'm still reasonably intact.

The Joint Commission, however, expresses the close identity of interest between the United States and Iran, and it attempts to express and it has successfully expressed, across a wide variety of common efforts, the close connection that has grown up between our two societies. Hushang said that he was somewhat pained that some Americans do not appreciate the nature of this relationship. I would like to say to him that the President, and the Secretary of State, and the Government of the United States do appreciate the nature of this relationship.

There has been a great deal of literature during the past week about the number of Americans that find themselves in Iran, and I think it might be useful to reflect about this. There are about 24,000 Americans in Iran. Of those, about 1,000 are military personnel; 2,000 are

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engaged in training activities that will end when the training is completed. Another thousand are engaged in combined training and maintenance activities, which will also end when the capabilities are developed. Five thousand are here in the oil business, and 2,000 are here in other businesses. And the rest are dependents. So it is true, there are 24,000 Americans here. There are 11,000 who are working here, 7,000 in civilian pursuits, and their families. So when people talk lightly about hostages, the hostages are created by the nature of the connection of our societies and not by any particular decision having to do with military affairs alone or even primarily. Iran is the country where in 1946 President Truman considered it important to the interest of the United States to confront the Soviet Union over Azerbaijan, when there were only a few hundred Americans in this country, because we thought then that the territorial integrity of Iran was important for the United States.

Iran is the country about which in 1949, again, President Truman developed Point Four, to express the close connection we felt not only with the territorial integrity but with the development of Iran. Iran is the country with which President Eisenhower in 1959 made an Executive Agreement in which he pledged that the United States would come again to the assistance of Iran against communist attack or communist-inspired attack, according to our constitutional processes. And while one can debate today, in the sophisticated period in which we have the great fortune of living, what the legal significance of an Executive Agreement was, there can be no question that it reflected the conviction of an American President that the security of Iran was an important interest of the United States.

And now, in 1976, when the efforts of 1946 and the efforts of 1949 have led to the result that Iran's security is no longer as precarious as it was right after the war and Iran's progress economically has reached a point where it is part of the plan of Iran that within ten years this country will have the economic level of activity of Western Europe today, under those conditions it goes without saying that Iran has not become less important to the United States.

At the time when Iran and the United States first encountered each other in the postwar period, we were predominant in the world; and we, in our innocence of international affairs, assumed all the burdens for defense and for economic advance. And it was indeed necessary that we do so because there was no one else to man the ramparts. Now, in 1976, the world has become much more complicated. Other centers of power have developed. The threats have become more complex. The United States cannot assume all the responsibilities. Under those conditions we especially value those friends who are prepared to make their own efforts for their economic advance and who are prepared to make a significant contribution to their own defense. As the recent period has made amply clear, the Middle East, always a pivot of world affairs, has become one of the potentially most tense areas of the globe. In the circumstances, the stability of Iran, the commitment of Iran to its security, is a major factor for global peace and a major factor in the stability of the Middle East.

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There are at least some Americans who do not take it for granted, because they remember that even in Iran things were not always that way and that they do not always have to be that way, and that we owe something to the farsighted leadership of His Imperial Majesty which has brought matters to this point. It is true that Iran has made great economic progress. It is also true that Iran has made strenuous efforts in its own defense. And finally, it is true that it has been the policy of the United States to support both of these efforts.

The first, the economic effort, no longer requires American support. In fact, it may be a little bit the reverse, if Hushang keeps raising the oil prices. But, in assessing the relationship between the two countries, we note a number of factors. First, on all major international issues, the policies of the United States and the policies of Iran have been parallel and therefore mutually reinforcing. Those countries which have represented the greatest threat to the security of Iran are also those countries whose domination of Iran would have a profound effect on the global balance of power or on the regional balance of power, and would therefore have profound consequences for the United States. In all the years of our cooperation, Iran has never gone to war or threatened to go to war for any purpose which would not have been parallel to our own. And this cooperation has been all the more significant because it grew out of a leadership that is clearly independent, that pursues its conception of its own national interest based on a history of 2500 years of Iranian policy, and this is what has made the cooperation all the more effective.

I do not want to paint too idyllic a picture. There have been conferences where we have not seen eye to eye — not involving questions of peace and war. Unfortunately, the technical competence of your personnel is such that when we do not agree, you can make life extremely unpleasant for us. But those occasions have been rare, and they have not gone to the central issues of global stability and global peace, not to the strategy towards the Middle East, nor to the strategy toward the Soviet Union, both key elements in the global balance.

I have taken the liberty of speaking in this manner because I wanted our Iranian friends to understand that, not out of sentimentality, though we are always happy here, but out of a calculation of our own national and global interests — just as Iranian policy is based on its calculation of its national interests — there has developed a parallelism of views on many key problems that has made our cooperation a matter that is in the profound national interest of both countries. This is the conviction of our Administration. It is this conviction that has brought me here, and it will be pursued in the period ahead.

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So it is in this spirit that I would like to propose a toast to your great leader, His Imperial Majesty the Shahanshah, and to the permanent friendship between the peoples of the United States and the great people of Iran. And, if I may, I also propose a toast to my good friend, the Minister of Finance and Mrs. Ansary.

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